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FACTS ABOUT DECATUR HOMESTEADS

Decatur, Indiana

Official Name: Decatur Homesteads.

Location: In Washington Township, Adams County, Indiana, adjoining the southern boundary of the City of Decatur, 25 miles southeast of Fort Wayne.

Number of Units: 48 tracts upon which 48 houses have been built.

History of Project: Initiated by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads of the Department of the Interior, December 20, 1933, Decatur Homesteads was transferred to the Resettlement Administration, June 1935. The construction was completed May 8, 1935. On November 1, 1936, the project was turned over to the Decatur Homesteads Association, Inc., a private agency, to be administered by it. All homesteaders are members of this association. It is governed by a board of directors, consisting of three homesteaders, one representative of the city of Decatur, one Resettlement Administration representative.

Purpose of Project: Decatur Homesteads was initiated as a workman's garden community for employed persons only. Its purpose is to provide better housing conditions and to raise the standard of living of part-time employees in the commercial and industrial establishment in the City of Decatur. By means of subsistence gardens, the homesteaders are given an opportunity to increase their real income by the production of home grown fruits and vegetables. Decatur is a small agricultural city, dependent on agriculture and industries allied with farming. The trend in the past has been from agriculture to industry and then reverses when industrial employment slackens.

Project Description: The tract selected for the project site is level, cleared and the entire 79 acres are suitable for cultivation. The soil is Brookston silty clay loam or black soil adapted to truck farming and table crops. It is well drained and no irrigation is necessary. The tract is within walking distance of the business section of Decatur and modern schools, churches and recreational centers are available to project residents. Water and electricity are supplied by the municipally owned light, power and water company of the City of Decatur. Individual septic tanks and city sewers provide sewage disposal, and gas supply and telephones are available to project residents. County constructed roads connect the homesites with each other and with adjacent highways.

House Description: Each of the 48 individual tracts contains a 5-room house and garage. These houses are 1½ or 2-story frame structures with half or full basement. Each house is equipped with a central hot air heating plant.

The Homesteaders: The families in residence at the Decatur Homesteads are a group of young married people whose heads are regularly employed in the commercial and industrial establishments in the City of Decatur. The wage earners are for the most part drawn from the skilled mechanical trades with a few engaged in service occupations. Of the entire group now in occupancy, 43 husbands and 30 wives have an agricultural background. All members of the community are American citizens, with varying educational backgrounds. A majority of the husbands and wives fall in the 20 to 35 year age group, are in good health and, with one exception, work regularly in full-time employment with an average annual income of \$1,167.

Results of Project: The town of Decatur has distinct pride in this community and visitors frequently are taken for a drive through this residential area. The civic pride in the project extends to the Homesteaders themselves who are taking an increasing interest in the affairs of their own community and the affairs of the City of Decatur of which they are a part.

Recently a Boosters Club has been organized among the Homestead people and it has been raising funds to buy park equipment, which the sponsoring agency, the City of Decatur, could not afford to provide.

It has also raised housing standards.

